



State of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707
1-888-936-7463

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Guide and Sport Trolling Informational Document

This is an interpreted summary of certain Wisconsin laws applicable to guiding and sport trolling. For a full listing of applicable provisions, please see Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Guide License

No person may engage or be employed for any compensation or reward to guide, direct, or assist any other person in hunting, fishing or trapping unless the person is issued a guide license by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) subject to s.29.512, Wis.Stats.

- A guide license is required to guide for fish species other than trout and salmon on outlying waters (bass or walleye for example). The U.S. Coast Guard license is still required to guide passengers from a vessel on these waters.
- A guide license is required for trout and salmon guiding on the Great Lakes by means other than “trolling” (i.e. if casting, drift fishing, jigging, tip-ups, etc.) and to guide customers for trout or salmon on the tributary streams to the Great Lakes regardless of method used.

All guide licenses run the calendar year from January 1 to December 31. License renewal notices for existing license holders will be distributed by email to current license holders if they have a valid email in their Go Wild DNR customer account in early December for the upcoming license year.

- Wisconsin Resident Guide License
 - License is required of a Wisconsin resident to guide, direct or assist any other person in hunting, fishing or trapping for any compensation or reward
 - New applicants must complete a Guide License Application (form 9400-019) – the cost is \$40
 - Applicant must be at least 18 years of age
- Non-Resident Fishing Guide License
 - License is required of a non-resident to guide, direct or assist any other person in fishing only for compensation or reward
 - New applicants must complete a Guide License Application (form 9400-019) – the cost is \$100
 - Applicant must be at least 18 years of age

If you plan to guide anglers on the Great Lakes, which includes Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Green Bay, and tributaries to those Lakes – you may be required to report each daily trip to the DNR electronic reporting system. Information on signing up for use of the electronic reporting system will be sent within one week of your license purchase. You will be required to sign-up for the system prior to the first trip of the year.

Outlying Waters Sport Trolling License

No person may be engaged or be employed for any compensation to guide any other person in sport trolling for trout or salmon in and upon the outlying waters unless the person is issued an Outlying Water Sporting Trolling license by the DNR subject to s.29.024 Wis. Stats.

This license is required to guide, direct or assist any other person in sport trolling for trout or salmon on outlying waters of the State of Wisconsin for any compensation or reward.

A valid operator's license number must be provided on the Outlying Water Sport Trolling application. The U.S. Coast Guard Operator's license is required to carry passengers, for hire on waters defined as navigable by the federal government. All of Wisconsin's outlying waters and several inland lakes and rivers are federally navigable. Contact the U.S. Coast Guard for more information.

New applicants must complete an Outlying Water Sport Trolling License Application (form 9400-245) – the resident cost is \$100.25 and the non-resident cost is \$400.25 and applicant must be at least 18 years of age. All Outlying Water Sport Trolling licenses run the calendar year from January 1 to December 31. License renewal notices for existing license holders will be distributed by email to current license holders if they have a valid email in their Go Wild DNR customer account in January for the upcoming license year.

- “Outlying waters” are defined in s.29.001(63), Wis.Stats, as Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, Sawyer’s Harbor and the Fox River from its mouth up to the dam at De Pere.
- The licensee and all person on board the licensee’s boat are required to comply with all the Wisconsin hunting, fishing and trapping regulations. The licensee is legally responsible for the number of fish taken aboard the sport troller’s boat. Boats used by the licensee shall meet minimum U.S. Coast Guard and Wisconsin boat licensing and safety requirements.
- Each licensee shall keep records of the number of each variety of fish taken under their sport trolling license and other information required by the DNR. Forms are due on or before the 10th day of the month for the preceding month.
- Federal law may impose additional licensing or permitting requirements. It is the responsibility of the licensee to know and comply with all applicable federal regulations.